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On making constructions crack and the body that moves at the boundaries

In her 1995 lecture about Eva Löfdahl's work, critic and writer Rita Roos (1956-1996) noted that "in principle (...) order works underground, but when abstraction is realized as three-dimensionality it may gain visibility, concrete presence."¹ This notion on the tension between abstracted (artistic) thought and concrete presence can work as a starting point to think about the mediation and presentation of art in a festival – in a recursive – setting.

after the first five minutes pretty much everyone was already asleep consists of an abstracted friendship in a concrete presence in the space of Galleri Blunk. The exhibition can be thought as a chamber piece or a still life of a friendship between four subjects, where limits between works of art, the signifier, and the exhibition are constantly re-negotiated. Laying on grass and moving through the living – the recumbent – body, the exhibition dispositions itself via the idea of a temporally limited event (such as a festival) to consider the notion of friendship. Thinking about – and questioning – the concept of friendship in the infrastructure(s) of contemporary art, one quickly drifts to the idea of *mutual benefit*; that is, in principle, the idea of a networked system of information and the mobility of that information in a global (read: western) world.²

What would it, then, mean to recognize the possibility of a *temporal cut*³ in a friendship figuring time-relatedly at least partly in a contemporary-art-preceding manner? The friendship as a medium for thinking-with in the exhibitionary logic presents itself as an opportunity to move the (friending) body to

¹ Cited in Kreuger, Anders & Roos, Nina (eds.) 2006. Rita Roos. Kritik, 150–151. Rotterdam: Veenman Publishers/Gijs Stork. Critic Rita Roos was a prominent art writer and major voice in the Nordics, serving as an art critic for Hufvudstadsbladet in Helsinki, the Finnish editor of Siksi – The Nordic Art Review, and contributing catalogue essays and exhibitionary texts for numerous artists. She died unexpectedly in 1996, aged 39, in Trondheim, where she worked as lecturer of art theory at the Trondheim Art Academy. The title of this text is formulated as a paraphrase from Roos' texts.

² See Isabelle Graw, 2023. On the Benefits of Friendship, passim. Berlin: Sternberg press. Regarding the histories of the relationship between the artist and the writer, see for example Shirley Ann Jordan, 1994. The Art Criticism of Francis Ponge, 18–142. London: W.S Maney & Son LTD for the Modern Humanities Research Association.

³ See Marina Vishmidt, 2016. *Between Not Everything and Not Nothing: Cuts Toward Infrastructural Critique*. In Hlavajova, Maria & Sheikh, Simon (eds.) Former West: Art and the Contemporary After 1989, 265-269. Utrecht: BAK basis voor actuele kunst & MIT Press.

the boundaries rather than to the center, where relying on friends as artistic collaborators is critically evaluated and, at the same time, is cherished as a cut towards a sustainable inter-human praxis.

In the art world, however, friendships and networks usually originate from educational and/or working contexts that are not accessible for everyone.⁴ As curator and researcher Adel Kim has noted, the current discourse on topical themes such as care or collaboration presents us with new questions on collaborating with friends, especially in non-institutionalized contexts⁵, because a sustainable working manner calls upon transparent curatorial and artistic processes.

after the first five minutes pretty much everyone was already asleep is and is not asleep at the same time. Art can function in the same manners than friendship from a self-pedagogical point of view. From friendship one can, to phrase writer Maggie Nelson, “learn(...) something about the craving for connection that art conjures, frustrates, and possibly exists to satisfy”.⁶ The tension in the exhibition builds upon a four-sided friendship existing before the interlinked character of contemporary art; still, it now exists – at least partly – through this character, celebrating itself for a few days as an exhibition.

-Eero Karjalainen, curator

⁴ See Adel Kim: *Against Friendship: On the Dark Side of Professional Intimacies*. NONIIN Magazine, issue 23, 3/2024. <https://no-niin.com/issue-23/against-friendship-on-the-dark-side-of-professional-intimacies/index.html>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Maggie Nelson, 2024. *Lights Up – A Preface*. In Maggie Nelson: Like Love – Essays and Conversations, xi-xiv. London: Fern Press.